- The Star
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Direction of Fatal Shot Disputed at Shaw Trial

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A University of Kansas pathologist testified at the Clay Shaw trial Monday that photographic evidence of President Kennedy's assassination was "compatible" with the theory that the fatal shot was fired from the front.

Over repeated defense objections, Dr. John M. Nichols gave his interpretation of the home movie of Kennedy's assassination in Dallas more than five years ago. His testimony contradicted an FBI photographic expert, who said the evidence indicated Kennedy was shot from behind.

The key question and answer:

Q. Can you give your expert opinion as to the direction from which the President's head was struck?

A. After viewing the Zapruder film and photographs of the frames, I would say this is compatible with a gunshot having been delivered from the front.

Nichols also testified that, in his opinion, President Kennedy reacted to a stimulus, presumably pain, before the fatal head shot, but that former Texas Gov. John Connally did not react at the same time.

Nichols' testimony ran counter to findings of the Warren Commission, which concluded that Kennedy and Connally were struck by the same bullet before Kennedy was shot fatally in the head.

Nichols was called in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's attempt to prove Kennedy died in a crossfire from at least two guns as the result of a conspiracy involving Shaw, 55, who is standing trial on a charge that he conspired to kill the President.

After Nichols was called to the stand, the jury viewed the Abraham Zapruder movie or slides from it for the ninth time in three days.

Earlier, a retired FBI agent testified that he hunted a mysterious "Clay Bertrand" in New Orleans three days after Kennedy's assassination.

But a telephone call to the U.S. attorney general for clearance was necessary before Regis L. Kennedy would answer two questions about the investigation. He said he was investigating the assassination and started a search for "Bertrand" after a telephone call from Dean Andrews, former Jefferson Parish assistant district attorney. Andrews later was convicted of perjury in Garrison's investigation.

It is Garrison's contention that Shaw was the "Clay Bertrand" who telephoned Andrews in an effort to get a lawyer for Lee Harvey Oswald, who was charged with the President's murder but was shot to death himself two days later.